

To a Certain BARONET.

S I R,

IT has been declared by a writer on your side of the question, that your intention of cramming your son into an allum-shop, is with a view to intitle him to be elected a member of council, and, in procefs of time, if possible, chief magistrate of this city. This, in my opinion, is one of the strongest indications that your interest is fast upon the decline; and indeed it may be said upon its last legs. Conscious that your increasing unpopularity is grown to such a height, that it would be in vain to attempt the making of new friends, that had no binding connection with you, you're even afraid of trusting any little influence you still retain to the fidelity and allegiance of the sneaking few who first brought and have hitherto kept you in. You must have your own son to watch their motions, and to keep them from wandering astray. But while this affair of the shop shows a consciousness of political weakness, it, like all other schemes of yours, destroys the effect it was intended to produce, and is at once an insult and reflection upon the people whose professions render it necessary for them to have any use for the commodity your son has advertised to deal in. It seems to be a shop, and no shop; for, so far as I can learn, none of the partners are ever to be seen in it. It indeed occupies a large space to the front of the street, which may be applied to more useful purposes; and you have on this, as on many other occasions, by the dint of money, or, in other words, paying a high rent, I suppose, turned some honest tradesman to the door, the easier to accomplish your selfish ends. But when you tell us in your advertisement, that allum is to be sold there, it is clogged with such conditions as no shop-keeper who really intended to deal, durst publish to the world. You won't sell under a certain quantity; and that so large, that few people, if any in town, has occasion for it at a time. By this means you very cunningly guard against the trouble of customers; and you must not only fix your quantity, but likewise annex to it another condition, not only inconsistent with the ordinary course of traffic here, but also highly injurious and reproachful to the credit of the citizens. You must have ready money for

for your allum, or bills at short dates ; plainly indicating, that you don't think the tradespeople and manufacturers in this place proper to be trusted. You wish for all the political advantages of a shop-keeper to your son, but you don't incline to have him pestered with the business of it ; and in case any body should be so wrong-headed as, mistaking your intention, to come to the shop, sensible that a young lad not bred to business of any kind, ought not to be trusted with setting down accounts, and calling them in, you have ordered him to deal in nothing but ready money. I observed that none of the partners were ever seen in the shop ; but as you have been all your days a queer *fellow*, and much given to *fun*, you have fallen upon a method of keeping this shop much more entertaining to those that might frequent it than any of the partners would be. I see, for the most part, hanging over the half-door, and often half asleep, a little squat-made laughing-faced younker, seemingly sneering at his employment, who, when bad weather forces him altogether within the shop, to prevent him falling asleep, immediately sets a playing on the fiddle ; and I am told, that he now and then gets in some of his female and male acquaintances, and plays reels to them ; so you may, with great propriety, advertise an allum-shop, a music-shop, and a dancing-school. I doubt much, Sir, if you have learning enough (for knowledge and riches don't always go hand and hand) to be acquainted with the properties of allum. But if you have, I should begin to discover different views you might have in this allum-adventure ; some of them seemingly generous and disinterested ; and others, which is more consistent with your character, selfish in a great degree. Your taking it into your head these two years past, though never before, that it is necessary to honour this place with your residence a few weeks previous to Michaelmas, (though, by the by, you now act by a substitute), may, I suspect, expose you to more eating and drinking, to keep up the sinking spirits of your friends, than is proper for a person of your age and infirmities, and be productive of those complaints that arise from riot and intemperance.

Hæmorrhoids, or piles, is one of these ; and, indeed, without any Michaelmas irregularities, it must be taken for granted, that you have them already : for all physicians tell us, this disease never fails to afflict persons of a loose spongy texture, of a bulky size, who live high, indulging in high seasoned dishes, the free-drinking of sweet wines, and lead a sedentary life. For this complaint, the use of allum is a sovereign remedy.— But there are some other disorders, which, it is more than probable, your political intemperance may bring upon you, if they have not come already ; and for which allum is also a favourite specific. Loose teeth, and a weakness of the gums, are of-

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ten occasioned by more than usual excess. And what physicians call *the aphthæ*, or superficial ulcers in the mouth, is common among old men, especially such as have been free livers; for in them the *vis vitæ* is languid, and the humours liable to become viscous: for all these complaints, the medical tribe never fail to recommend allum: And though you are much to be pitied, if you're afflicted with all, or any of them; yet I must applaud your sagacity, though, at the same time, it partakes a great deal of interestedness and attention to your own personal conveniency, in providing a good store of that commodity, which may be so necessary for your own preservation.

Notwithstanding that I'm not much in love with you, I would still chuse, out of material justice, to put as favourable a gloss upon your conduct as possible; and I think, on the present occasion, I have discovered some share of generosity and benevolence showing its face through the allum-undertaking: but I must observe, at the same time, that as you have connected yourself hitherto, not with the most respectable of the citizens and inhabitants of the male sex, in like manner, the good effects intended by you to the women, are confined in a great measure to such as are not, however useful to society, in the highest repute and estimation. It is proper then to let you know, that allum is a violent *astringent*, *bracer*, and *contractor*. I dare say you have heard the story of Mother Douglas, who being asked by a gentleman that came into her room, while she was boiling allum in a goblet, what she was about? What am I about, says she, I am making a *maidenhead* for *General Peper*. A word to the wise is enough; and it is needless to enlarge much upon a thing that is sufficiently well known, and wide enough already. The scheme, therefore, taken in this view, may be said to be the only generous and public-spirited one you ever devised; and shows a laudable compassion for a very numerous occupation of females in this place, who stand much in need of allum-applications, and are so poor, that they would not be able to purchase a sufficient quantity, if you, out of your generosity, did not sell it at the London prices. By this means, while you are sinking in estimation in one quarter, you are gaining it in another. But it is generous also on another account; for on this occasion you are doing good to others, without having the least prospect of ever reaping the smallest advantage or pleasure from it yourself. The mantuamaking and milliner girls have a saying among them, That souple points need wide pie-holes; and I believe, if from the use of your allum, the women in this town should be restored to their original state, or equal to it, they might all lead apes in hell for either good or ill they would receive from their allum-benefactor.

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This introduction of the use of allum, though it may raise your character among women, I must observe to you, for your own sake, may very probably meet with the disapprobation and repentment of several honest sober-living husbands, who chuse to have things go easy with them, don't chuse to have the circle of their domestic recreations in the least contracted, and hate trouble and fatigue of any kind, and who would not, at an advanced period of life, incline to have their wives restored to their antenuptial condition. In this class are comprehended several of your dependents in the city; therefore beware what you're about, and don't push this project of your's, as you have done most others in your life, farther than what sense and prudence dictate. But while you display such kind intentions to the ladies of the town, I think you are not a little to blame in having neglected some of your adherents in the administration. To combat the efficacy of allum, it is necessary for some people to swallow searching provocatives, and to undergo chastisement and bodily pain. Now, Sir, I dare say your capital could have enabled you to deal also to a moderate extent in flagellation-rods and cantharides. The doing so might have been of service to you, both as a shop-keeper and politician; but, upon recollection, I see I'm in a mistake in recommending the last, as it would have interfered with your friend the apothecary, by whom it is sold to the phlegmatic tedious members of the council-board, cheaper than by any body else.

A SKINNER.

